

# Othello

The commercial district in the Othello station area (consisting of neighborhood commercial, mixed, moderate-density residential uses) can serve as the focal point for a transit-oriented neighborhood. Infill development can create a more compact urban form without altering the character of existing development in the station area.

## **SOUND TRANSIT ALIGNMENT AND STATION OPTIONS**

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All alignments call for an at-grade station near Othello Street. The potential site for the Othello station would be near S. Othello Street at MLK Way.

## **EXISTING STATION AREA CONDITIONS**

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### **LAND USE AND HOUSING**

Single-family uses cover the largest amount of land in the Othello station area, followed by retail uses. The 12 acres of retail uses indicate that this location is the Holly Park neighborhood's major commercial district.

The single-family uses in the Othello station area create a very low-density environment, with single-family residential neighborhoods in the station area in the range of 4 units per acre. The Holly Park redevelopment area is approximately 9 units per acre.



*View along Martin Luther King Jr. Way looking north from Othello Street.*

## TRANSPORTATION

The major arterial streets serving the Othello station area are South Othello Street (east-west direction) and MLK Way South (north-south direction). Although this area serves as the commercial hub of the Holly Street neighborhood, the strip commercial uses are predominantly-oriented to the automobile and set back from the street with large parking lots that prevent convenient pedestrian access from surrounding areas. Specific transportation characteristics of the Othello station area include:

- *Auto Access to Adjacent Neighborhoods.* MLK Jr. Way is the principal automobile route in the area. Othello Street provides a complementary east-west linkage, including directly to Interstate 5 to the west.

<b>Othello Station Area – Existing Conditions – 1997<sup>1</sup></b>	
Population	1,046
Employment	242
Median Household Income (1996)	\$ 21,935
<i>Residential Land Use</i>	
Total Dwelling Units	370
Density <sup>2</sup>	
Single-family Zones	3.5
Multi-family Zones	8.9
<i>Commercial Land Use</i>	
Total Floor Area (sq. ft.)	445,980
Retail/Service	170,369
Office	24,195
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) <sup>3</sup>	0.12
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
<sup>2</sup> Dwelling units per net acre in specified residential zones. Residential units in non-residential and downtown zones are excluded.	
<sup>3</sup> Ratio of non-residential space per net acre of commercial and industrial land use.	

- *Pedestrian Circulation.* MLK, Jr. Way is not particularly oriented to pedestrians, nor does it permit convenient or comfortable access from adjacent neighborhoods. The compact street grid east of the station site may allow for pedestrian movement throughout the residential neighborhood. The winding streets of the Holly Park redevelopment project make convenient and direct pedestrian travel more difficult.

### **Community Issues**

The *MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan Recommendations* include provisions for pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the neighborhood. Specific issues of concern include:

- *Pedestrian Circulation.* The community wants to develop a pedestrian/bike path between Othello Park, the light rail station, and the Van Asselt Community Center, as well as to increase the number of crosswalks on MLK, Jr. Way.
- *Bicycle Amenities.* Bicycle parking areas for development in the station area and bicycle lanes along MLK, Jr. Way would help promote bicycle access to the station.

### **1995 Metro Six-Year Plan**

MLK Way South is designated a major consolidation corridor, meaning that bus service along the corridor will be consolidated to improve efficiency. Savings from the efficiency improvements will be reinvested in the subareas where the savings are generated. Meanwhile, bus frequencies along the Rainier Beach-Downtown core connection will be increased. The connection uses Rainier Avenue South – roughly parallel to MLK, about one mile east – as a primary corridor.

These strategies are consistent with the Plan’s overall objective to improve Metro’s service structure. Routes are consolidated, bus frequencies are increased along core routes, and transit hubs of various size provide quick, easy transfers.

## **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK**

MLK Way South is the major arterial in the station area. Pedestrian connections west to Beacon Hill are inadequate, because the City Light Right of Way creates a barrier that is traversed by only a few streets. Van Asselt Park is nearby on Beacon Hill, but not within an easy walking distance from the station area.

Othello Park is the closest large open space in the area. The 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Park will be relocated from Holly Street (north of station area) to Othello Street (inside the western half of the station area) as part of the Holly Park redevelopment project. The commercial uses adjacent to the station site are within easy walking distance of the station site.

## **URBAN DESIGN FEATURES**

The Othello station area is located in an auto-oriented commercial area. Adjacent to this area is a residential neighborhood and to the west is the Holly Park redevelopment site. The 100-acre Holly Park project consists of the redevelopment of 1,200 new market-rate and affordable housing units and a new “Campus of Learners” (including a library, community college branch, and family services). This project will be developed in three phases by the Seattle Housing Authority.

*Background Report for Light Rail Station Area Planning in Seattle:  
Existing Conditions and Future Prospects for Transit-Oriented Development*

Typical uses in the Othello station area include single-family, multi-family, neighborhood commercial, and commercial development. Zoning changes being considered for the neighborhood include:

- developing a Residential Parking Zone program;
- refining NC zoning district development standards to give incentives for transit-oriented development; and
- establishing a pedestrian overlay zone.

The *MLK @ Holly Street draft plan* includes proposals to:

- develop a mixed-use “Town Center” around the Othello station;
- integrate the Holly Park redevelopment into the community through streetscape improvements, including along South Othello and Holly Streets;
- develop a landscaped median along MLK, Jr. Way South;
- develop landscaped gateways at various locations in the neighborhood;
- develop a street tree program for MLK, Jr. Way and South Othello Street;
- include a community plaza and kiosk as part of the light rail station; and
- develop pedestrian and bike path connections between the station and the neighborhood.

Light rail workshops held in the neighborhood revealed that residents are interested in (1) creating a pedestrian corridor to link the Holly Park residential area with MLK Way; (2) planting additional trees along MLK, Jr. Way; and (3) providing opportunities for new housing and additional jobs to encourage walking and transit use.



*A grocery store and large surface parking lot occupy the northwest corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and Othello Street.*

### **Visual Landmarks**

There are no significant visual landmarks in the area. The Safeway grocery store at MLK, Jr. Way and Othello Street is a neighborhood destination.

### **Views**

There are views of Lake Washington and the Cascade mountains from the western portions of the station area.

## **RECENT MARKET TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

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### **MARKET CONDITIONS**

Similar to other station areas in the Rainier Valley, housing vacancies around Othello station are approximately 6%, and apartment rents are low compared to other parts of Seattle. However, land prices for multi-family residential uses have been increasing more quickly than in the I-90, McClellan or Columbia City station areas.

There is some evidence of new commercial investment in the Othello station area, including commercial land prices that are increasing at nearly 9%. This suggests the additional new development may be possible in the near future.

<b>Othello Station Area – Market Conditions<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>Rents and Vacancy Rates</b>	
Apartment Rents (sq. ft.)	\$ 0.71
Apartment Vacancy Rate	6.0%
Office Rents (sq. ft.)	N/A
Office Vacancy Rate	N/A
<b>Trends in Land Prices<sup>2</sup></b>	
Commercial Lots	8.9%
Single Family Lots	7.5%
Multi-family Lots	7.5%
<b>Active Permit Applications</b>	
Housing Units	0
Commercial Space (sq. ft.)	0
Projected 2010 LRT Boardings	2,000
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
<sup>2</sup> 1985-95 average annual increase, based on sales prices recorded by King County Assessor and reported by zone category.	

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Holly Park redevelopment project to the west of MLK, Jr. Way will bring new residents to the area. When completed, this new population will support additional commercial services within the station area.

The corner of MLK, Jr. Way and Othello Street would be the most logical place for redevelopment, particularly given the density and condition of existing development and the presence of large surface parking lots. The Union Gospel Mission and Mycon sites are underutilized, and the New Life Bible Fellowship has proposed a project (a 3-story building with retail on the ground floor and church offices above) at MLK and Othello.

## RELATIVE STRENGTH OF DEVELOPMENT MARKETS IN THE OTHELLO STATION AREA

Housing has the greatest market potential in the Othello station area and would complement the existing single-family and multi-family housing in the area. Single-family areas can achieve higher densities through accessory dwelling units, and multi-family structures could potentially provide new housing opportunities in proximity to the station.

<b>Othello Station Area – Relative Market Strength<sup>1</sup></b>	
	Ranking (5 high, 1 low)
Housing	2
Retail	1
Office	1
<sup>1</sup> Indicates relative strength of market type of station area, compared to other potential station areas. Ranking is based on rents, employment levels, vacancy rates, land values, recent development activity, stakeholder interviews, field observations, and other information.	

## EXISTING PLANS AND ZONING

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### PLANNING CONTEXT

The Othello station area is located primarily within the MLK at Holly Street Residential Urban Village. The station area is situated in a primarily-residential neighborhood with a neighborhood commercial strip centered at the intersection of MLK Way South and S. Othello Street. The 100-acre Holly Park public housing site, which is undergoing a complete mixed-income redevelopment, comprises a significant portion of the station area.

## ZONING

The zoning in the Othello station area allows for development in varying densities, with the highest density in commercial areas along MLK, Jr. Way to lower density single-family residential uses farther away. Commercial zones allow for auto-oriented retail and commercial uses along MLK, with NC2 and NC3 zones located in select spots to provide transitions to residential areas.

Adjacent to the Othello Street commercial district, low-rise multi-family residential zones allow for some intensive residential development. The large L2 zone to the southwest of the station area includes the location of the third phase of the Holly Park redevelopment area. All together, the three phases are currently planned to provide 1,200 ground-related mixed-income housing units. Beyond these concentrated commercial and residential areas are single-family residential zones (SF 5000).

### *Southeast Seattle Reinvestment Area (SESRA)*

Commercial areas abutting MLK Way South are included in the SESRA Overlay District, the intent of which is to promote community revitalization and investment, business activity, and employment opportunities for Southeast Seattle residents. SESRA's neighborhood-oriented and pedestrian-oriented regulations can serve as the basis for transit-supportive policies. SESRA regulations encompass two types of regulations:

- *Prohibited Uses.* SESRA prohibits uses incompatible with reinvestment goals, such as outdoor storage, adult movie theaters, work release centers, and construction services.
- *Rezoning Criteria.* SESRA establishes criteria for the rezoning of base districts. A rezoning must reinforce existing commercial nodes and promote business retention, or it must enhance the business environment (increased pedestrian activity; more retail, entertainment, and personal services; infill development; more recreational opportunities).

<b>Othello Station Area – Potential Development Under Current Zoning Regulations<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<i>Commercial (sq. ft)</i>	<i>Residential (units)</i>
Existing Development	445,980	370
Additional Potential Development under Current Zoning Regulations <sup>2</sup>	286,736	524
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>732,716</b>	<b>894</b>
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.		
<sup>2</sup> Potential development capacity is based on City of Seattle GIS database and Scenario 2 in the “Zoned Development Capacity” background paper.		

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN ISSUES

Key neighborhood concerns focus on connecting the neighborhood to the transit station through transit-oriented development. Specific issues include:

- Integration of Seattle Housing Authority's Holly Park redevelopment plan and design processes with light rail station area planning;
- Promotion of transit-supportive development by working with commercial and institutional property owners;
- Connection of the light rail station with south Seattle destinations;
- Use of station design and location to ensure public safety;
- Preservation of the community character; and
- Creation of an activity center around the light rail station, as a focus for transit-oriented development.

## STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

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The MLK @ Holly neighborhood values transportation to jobs and services, due to the high transit use of its public housing residents. The neighborhood participated in two field trips and two light rail workshops in 1997 to plan for the light rail station and surrounding areas. In addition, the neighborhood has developed specific ideas about how the Othello station area should be developed:

- *Safety and Neighborhood Image.* "This is an area that people perceive to be a crime-ridden and economically depressed neighborhood, when the reality is the opposite. The neighborhood will benefit from people coming here and having their assumptions challenged."
- *Mix of Uses.* "We need a good mix of housing, office, and retail for a true urban village concept around station." "If they put a station at MLK Jr. Way and Othello, they may need to rezone for business. This will increase ridership, because people will go to business districts."
- *Pedestrian and Bicycle Network.* "The station should be a place that links bicycle and pedestrian activities with open space, a farmer's market, and station and neighborhood destinations on Beacon Hill and the Rainier Valley."
- *Neighborhood Center.* "Create an outdoor plaza near the station with a farmer's market and an outdoor amphitheater."

## STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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### AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Othello station area has 37 parcels and approximately 15 acres of land available for development. Opportunity sites represent vacant parcels, as well as select parcels that can potentially be increased in density. The largest total number of acres of opportunity sites are located in commercial districts along MLK, Jr. Way. These zones provide the greatest opportunity for increased density and mixed use development.



### ***Zoning for Opportunity Sites***

Most opportunity sites are found in C1 zones, which allow a wide variety of commercial land uses in addition to mixed use development. However, because the existing commercial uses in the area are predominantly low-intensity and auto-oriented, it is less likely that mixed use development will be constructed in the C1 zones without additional provisions. In addition to opportunity sites in the commercial areas, there are opportunity sites in the L2 and SF5000 zones, which allow for low-rise multi-family and single-family residential development, respectively.

<b>Othello Station Area – Opportunity Sites by Zoning Designation<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Acreage<sup>2</sup></i>
NC2-40	2	0.36
SF 5000	5	3.49
NC3-65	5	0.90
L-2	18	4.74
C1-65	2	2.19
C1-40	5	3.10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14.78</b>
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.		
<sup>2</sup> Based on City of Seattle GIS database.		

## **DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS**

Existing zoning in the Othello station area may constrain the potential for transit-oriented development. The single-family residential zones have low density development patterns and do not permit mixed use development. The L2 multi-family residential zones allow more density, but do not allow mixed use development that would promote pedestrian access to the station. Commercial zones allow for mixed use development, but they also allow a wide range of commercial activities and have no incentives for mixed use.

Overall, current zoning is likely to encourage and maintain the existing separation of low-density uses in the neighborhood, so without rezoning, development will not be likely to create improved conditions for pedestrian activity in the station area.

## **STATION AREA FORECASTS**

Three different forecasts were developed for the new population, employment, dwelling units, and commercial floor area that will be added to the station area by 2020:

1. “Without light rail transit;”

2. “With light rail transit, but without supportive land use policies;” and
3. “With both light rail transit *and* supportive land use policies.”

## **POPULATION AND HOUSING**

The PSRC Trends and *Comprehensive Plan* Extrapolation forecasts for the Othello station area are very similar, forecasting an average of 75 new housing units. Approximately 25 acres of the station area are included in Seattle’s Housing Authority’s Holly Park redevelopment project and could add an additional 200-300 units to the station area, depending on how the site is redeveloped. To account for this project in the Othello station area forecast, the dwelling unit forecast was increased to 250 additional units and the population forecast to 375 new people.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL FLOOR AREA**

The PSRC and *Comprehensive Plan* Extrapolation forecasts for commercial space are also similar. An average of the two forecasts results in additional commercial space totaling 60,000 square feet. Existing space at several underutilized sites could be used more intensively to boost employment above the forecast by an additional 200 jobs. However, most of this new space would tend to be developed as auto-oriented retail uses that take advantage of high traffic volumes on MLK Way.

## **LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL**

The land use impacts of “rail without supportive policies” will likely be a modest increase in housing in the station area. Because of the heavy auto traffic on MLK Way, new housing development would likely be dispersed within the station area rather than concentrated on MLK Way. The possible reconfiguration of MLK Way to fewer lanes to accommodate a surface light rail may make the area around the station more attractive for new development.

## **LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL WITH SUPPORTIVE POLICIES**

The potential development strategies for the Othello station area focus on providing incentives in the zoning code for in-fill residential and mixed used development on opportunity parcels on MLK Way. There is also a need for improved pedestrian linkages. The Mayor’s proposed tax exemption program would provide an additional financial incentive for private development projects. Redevelopment of the Holly Park housing project offers substantial opportunities for building town houses and garden apartments that would increase the population density around the Othello station site to 15 to 20 units per acre. Targeted development strategies could boost the number of new dwelling units in the station area by 150 units and could more than double the amount of new commercial floor area to a total of 160,000 square feet.

<b>Othello Station Area – Market Forecasts, 1997-2020<sup>1</sup></b>				
	<u>1997</u>	<u>1997-2020 Growth</u>		
		<i>Without LRT</i>	<i>With LRT Only</i>	<i>LRT and Supportive Policies</i>
Population	1,046	375	390	615
Dwelling Units	370	250	260	410
Employment	242	200	210	530
Commercial Floor Area <sup>2</sup>	446	60	63	160

<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.

<sup>2</sup> Square footage (in thousands); includes commercial, industrial and institutional space, but excludes Sound Transit facilities and public facilities.

## POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Potential development strategies for the Othello station area should focus on improving access to the station and integrating the station with the surrounding neighborhood. The Othello station can potentially become a higher-density mixed use node, although public assistance may be necessary to achieve this. The Holly Park redevelopment project provides an example of a successful project using public assistance to provide additional affordable housing opportunities. Consistent with the Rainier Valley overall, the Othello station area has lower apartment rents and higher vacancy rates, suggesting that public assistance is necessary for successful development projects. The overall development strategy for the Othello station area can be summarized as follows:

- *Increased Density.* Adequate zoning can provide incentives for higher density development and greater height in the station area;
- *Pedestrian Environment.* The station area can be made more oriented to pedestrians. Implementation of a POZ would provide for pedestrian facilities and limit auto-oriented uses, helping to encourage walking to and from the station. Linkages to adjacent neighborhoods can also be enhanced; and
- *Shared Parking.* Shared parking can potentially help balance the parking needs of retail customers and residents.

The table on the following page shows high-priority and other recommended actions for the Othello station area. The possibility of proactively assisting businesses to relocate within the station area could serve as a pilot project to prepare the community for changes associated with light rail construction. Relocated businesses would be poised to benefit from the light rail station, rather than lose business. There are key opportunities for joint development partnerships in this station area, including retail and mixed use projects as part of the Holly Park redevelopment (phase 3).

## Potential Development Strategies: Othello (31)

Strategy	Potential Action	Comments
Land Use Tools	●	Limit auto-oriented uses on MLK for CI and NC3 opportunity sites. Provide incentives for TOD, including increased height and density for CI-40 area adjacent to station, and contract rezone of L-2 within Holly Park Phase 3.
Pedestrian Network	●	Improve linkages to adjacent neighborhoods, particularly Holly Park. Linkage to Chief Sealth Trail in powerline right-of-way.
Parking Management	●	Establish RPZs in Holly Park and adjacent residential neighborhoods, if needed. Explore shared parking for retail development, with reduced parking ratios at Holly Park Redevelopment Phase 3 (coincident with start of light rail service).
Economics/Financial Assistance	●	Help CDCs help finance affordable housing and economic development projects.
Regulatory Process	✓ / ?	SESRA in place. Provide expedited review/SEPA clearance for TOD projects.
Local Transit Service	○	Provide bus service to Holly Park Campus of Learners and South Beacon Hill neighborhoods.
Development Partnerships	●	Retail and mixed-use joint development with Holly Park redevelopment (Phase 3).
Pilot Projects	●	Accelerate relocation of businesses (in anticipation of impacts of Sound Transit right-of-way needs) into new Town Center TOD project, pursuant to Neighborhood Plan goals.

✓ = Supportive Policy/Program in Place  
 ● = High Priority Action  
 ○ = Recommended Action  
 ? = Further Study Required

TOD = Transit-Oriented Development  
 POZ = Pedestrian Overlay Zone  
 RPZ = Residential Parking Zone

# Henderson

The small commercial center in the Henderson station area can serve as the focal point for a transit-oriented neighborhood, with South Henderson Street serving as an attractive boulevard that connects the station to the Rainier Beach commercial area on Rainier Avenue South. Infill development along the boulevard can create a more compact urban form without altering the character of existing development in the station area.

## **SOUND TRANSIT ALIGNMENT AND STATION OPTIONS**

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All alignment options north of the Boeing Access Road include a station at MLK, Jr. Way South and S. Henderson Street. The Rainier Beach neighborhood center is located just to the east of the station area and includes the Rainier Beach High School and a commercial area.

## **EXISTING STATION AREA CONDITIONS**

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### **LAND USE AND HOUSING**

Land uses in the Henderson station area primarily include single-family homes, multi-family apartments, and commercial uses. The area to the north of the station site is primarily residential; to the south, the area changes to light industrial and manufacturing uses.



*Commercial strip development at southeast corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Henderson.*

Vacant and City-owned parcels comprise the largest number of acres in the Henderson station area (120 parcels), occupying more than 35% of the station area. This suggests that the neighborhood has not experienced investment in recent years. The second and third most prevalent land uses in the station area are single-family homes and the elementary/middle schools located at the eastern edge of the station area.

The single-family and vacant parcels in the Henderson station area create a very low-density environment. Single-family residential neighborhoods within the station area range between 2 to 3 units per acre, similar to large-lot suburban development. Even multi-family areas in the station area have relatively low densities of less than 6 units per acre.

## TRANSPORTATION

The major arterial streets that serve the Henderson station area are South Henderson Street (east-west direction) and MLK, Jr. Way (north-south direction). Although the intersection of Henderson and MLK is developed in small-scale commercial uses, these uses are of a “strip commercial” character and are set back from the street behind large parking lots. This configuration prevents convenient pedestrian access from surrounding areas. Specific transportation characteristics of the Henderson station area include:

<b>Henderson Station Area – Existing Conditions, 1997<sup>1</sup></b>	
Population	755
Employment	219
Median Household Income (1996)	\$ 47,405
<i>Residential Land Use</i>	
Total Dwelling Units	282
Density <sup>2</sup>	
Single-family Zones	2.2
Multi-family Zones	5.7
<i>Commercial Land Use</i>	
Total Floor Area (sq. ft.)	350,621
Retail/Service	46,990
Office	550
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) <sup>3</sup>	0.07
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
<sup>2</sup> Dwelling units per net acre in specified residential zones. Residential units in non-residential and downtown zones are excluded.	
<sup>3</sup> Ratio of non-residential space per net acre of commercial and industrial land use.	

- *Auto Access to Adjacent Neighborhoods.* MLK, Jr. Way and Renton Avenue South are the principal automobile routes in the station area. South Cloverdale Street provides a complementary east-west link to Henderson Street.
- *Pedestrian Circulation.* MLK, Jr. Way is not particularly pedestrian-oriented and inhibits convenient and comfortable access from adjacent neighborhoods. Carkeek Drive is an element of the historic Olmsted Plan and offers a wooded trail-like environment for recreational walking and biking. Improving Henderson Street would offer better pedestrian connections to the east.

### **Community Issues**

The *Rainier Beach Neighborhood 2014 Preliminary Plan* includes several strategies for improving circulation and access for alternative modes of transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle travel and transit use, while limiting automobile access through parking limitations. The goal is to better link the neighborhoods with the light rail station through specific streets and corridors. Specific issues include the following:

- *Pedestrian and Bicycle Corridors.* Create pedestrian and bicycle corridors to link residences and businesses within the station area, and transform Henderson Street into a landscaped “connector boulevard” to serve pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, and local transit.
- *Transit Connections.* Transport people to the light rail station with an east-west shuttle bus on South Henderson Street.
- *Parking Limitations.* Provide only limited parking around the light rail station.

### **1995 Metro Six-Year Plan**

The Rainier Beach area is already an important transit center in the Seattle region, with King County’s *1995 Six-Year Transit Development Plan* targeting it for improvements in transit services and facilities over for the next several. As a designated transit hub, Rainier Beach is slated for increased bus frequencies and several policies focus additional and improved bus service to the area:

- *Designated Transit Hub.* The *Development Plan* establishes 44 transit hubs throughout the Seattle region, including Rainier Beach, which may receive service/facility improvements, depending upon service routes and transit frequencies (Strategy C-1).
- *Improved Bus Frequencies.* Bus frequency will be increased along core routes, including routes from Rainier Beach to Downtown Seattle (Strategy S-2). Improved bus frequencies and the area’s proximity to suburban communities south of Seattle will make the Henderson station area a major transfer center.

## **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK**

The flat terrain of the Henderson station area, and the available bicycle routes and sidewalks, facilitate bike and pedestrian access to the station area. The City Light right-of-way can potentially be used as a pedestrian or bicycle trail. Beacon Hill, a stable residential neighborhood to the west of the station site, is physically separated from the Henderson light rail station site by a steep hillside, making pedestrian and bicycle access to areas west of the station difficult.

## **URBAN DESIGN FEATURES**

The Henderson station area is less defined and more open in character than other station areas in the Rainier Valley due to the lack of new development in the immediate vicinity. The wooded slopes of Beacon Hill, undeveloped parcels of land, and wide City Light powerline right-of-way all contribute to the overall character of the Henderson station area.

### ***Visual Landmarks***

Carkeek Drive winds through a heavily-wooded area (an element of the historic Olmsted Plan) on the slope in the western portion of the station area.

### ***Views***

There are views of Lake Washington from the Henderson station area.



*Looking west along Henderson towards station site and Beacon Hill. Note the City Light right-of-way which could include a regional trail corridor.*

## **RECENT MARKET TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

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### **MARKET CONDITIONS**

Similar to other station areas in the Rainier Valley, housing vacancies in the Henderson station area are approximately 6%, and apartment rents are low compared to other parts of Seattle. However, land prices for multi-family residential uses have been increasing more



quickly in this station area than in others in the Rainier Valley. Recent residential development in the area suggests that additional development may be possible in the future.

There is some evidence of recent commercial development activity in the Henderson station area, although commercial land values are increasing at less than 1%, suggesting a weak market for future commercial development.

<b>Henderson Station Area – Market Conditions<sup>1</sup></b>	
Rents and Vacancy Rates	
Apartment Rents (sq. ft.)	\$ 0.71
Apartment Vacancy Rate	6.0%
Office Rents (sq. ft.)	N/A
Office Vacancy Rate	N/A
Trends in Land Prices <sup>2</sup>	
Commercial Lots	0.9%
Single Family Lots	6.2%
Multi-family Lots	9.1%
Active Permit Applications	
Housing Units	8
Commercial Space (sq. ft.)	6
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.	
<sup>2</sup> 1985-95 average annual increase; based on sales prices recorded by King County Assessor and reported by zone category.	

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Several development projects are currently underway (e.g., SEED's redevelopment of Seward Park Estates) or have been proposed in the station area. *Rainier Beach Neighborhood 2014 Preliminary Plan* proposes to revitalize the neighborhood with a "Beach Square" development near the intersection of Rainier Avenue and Henderson Street. This project would enhance the shopping center area and encourage new housing. The Stock Market grocery store, owned by QFC, is considering redevelopment of the store and site at the southeast corner of Rainier Avenue and Henderson Street.

Opportunities for development in the Henderson station area include sites for new commercial and multifamily housing projects adjacent to the station site, infill housing, and a potential regional multi-use trail in the City Light powerline right-of-way.

## RELATIVE STRENGTH OF DEVELOPMENT MARKETS IN THE HENDERSON STATION AREA

The Henderson station area has minimal market potential overall. The relatively low residential and commercial development activity, low residential rents, and small increases in commercial land values suggest a sluggish local development market. Increasing land prices for residential development suggest that a market may evolve for additional residential projects.

Henderson Station Area – Relative Market Strength <sup>1</sup>	
	Ranking (5 high, 1 low)
Housing	1
Retail	1
Office	1
<sup>1</sup> Indicates relative strength of market type of station area, compared to other potential station areas. Ranking is based on rents, employment levels, vacancy rates, land values, recent development activity, stakeholder interviews, field observations, and other information.	

## EXISTING PLANS AND ZONING

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### PLANNING CONTEXT

The Henderson station area is located partly within the Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village and is characterized by residential uses, the City Light transmission right-of-way, large tracts of City-owned greenbelt, and limited commercial uses along MLK Way South and S. Henderson Street. The Dunlap Elementary School is located within the station area. The neighborhood's primary retail area, South Shore Middle School, Rainier Beach High School, Rainier Beach Community Center, and Rainier Beach branch library are all located to the east, just outside the station area along Rainier Avenue.

### ZONING

Zoning in the Henderson station area provides for development of varying densities, from the commercial areas along MLK, Jr. Way to lower density single-family residential uses farther away. Commercial zones (C1 and C2) allow for auto-oriented retail and commercial uses along MLK, Jr. Way, and NC2 zoning along South Henderson Street provides a transition between the C zones and residential areas.

Low-rise multi-family residential zones (including L1 and L3) are located behind the commercial uses on South Henderson Street and on other select sites throughout the station area. Surrounding this cluster of commercial and multi-family residential uses are SF5000 single-family residential zones.

<b>Henderson Station Area – Potential Development Under Current Zoning Regulations<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<i>Commercial (sq. ft.)</i>	<i>Residential (units)</i>
Existing Development	350,621	282
Additional Potential Development under Current Zoning Regulations <sup>2</sup>	320,519	598
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>671,140</b>	<b>880</b>
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of station location.		
<sup>2</sup> Potential development capacity is based on City of Seattle GIS database and Scenario 2 in the “Zoned Development Capacity” background paper.		

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN ISSUES

According to *Rainier Beach Neighborhood 2014 Land Use and Housing Goals*, the Rainier Beach community would like to establish a land use and zoning plan to preserve the neighborhood’s single-family areas, discourage multi-family development, and encourage mixed use residential/commercial and small-lot residential development. The neighborhood would like to develop a zoning strategy to encourage new housing in a mixed-use “beach square” area near the intersection of Rainier Avenue South and South Henderson Street. The Rainier Beach 2014 Land Use and Housing Committee identified the following options for land use and zoning:

- *Moderate-Density, Mixed Use Development in the Immediate Station Area.* Mixed use development should replace auto-oriented uses allowed under the C1-40 and C2-40 zoning at the intersection of MLK and Henderson. Pedestrian-oriented frontages and moderate density housing (16-24 units per acre) over ground-floor transit-oriented retail uses would be allowed. Henderson Street would be a boulevard linking the station to the retail uses on Rainier Avenue.
- *Community Center.* Parking lots in front of the tennis courts on South Henderson could be developed for a community focus (such as a plaza) that would fit in with the boulevard concept and provide a midway focal point between MLK, Jr. Way and Rainier Avenue.
- *New Retail Uses.* New commercial development at Henderson and Rainier would eliminate parking from the corner. Taller buildings, spires, streetscape improvements, and new landscaping can help create a sense of place. Pedestrian walkways and trees can improve the walking environment.
- *Infill Housing Redevelopment.* New infill housing can help enhance Henderson Street as a boulevard. In addition to retail, childcare and other community facilities can occupy ground-floor spaces.

The Rainier Beach 2014 neighborhood plan recommendations also include concepts for improving urban design and pedestrian circulation:

- *Streetscape and Urban Design.* The Henderson Street Boulevard concept can be enhanced by widened sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture. New buildings can be oriented to the street, with consistent height limits and building frontages creating a strong street identity.
- *Walking and Bicycling Routes.* The powerline right-of-way can be used as a linkage to regional bike and trail systems.

## STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

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Although many people in the Rainier Beach neighborhood prefer to have a station at Rainier Avenue South and South Henderson Street, neighborhood objectives can be met if the light rail station is located at MLK Jr. Way and Henderson. The neighborhood participated in a workshop in June of 1998 to begin examining specific options for station area planning. Stakeholders believe that the station can help spark redevelopment and public improvements, assuming that specific transportation, streetscape, and economic development recommendations receive action and public investment. Specific comments of community members include the following:

- *Increased Residential Density.* “Density is inevitable. The questions is: how do you plan for growth?” “The debate to come is density. [The neighborhood plan] did not decide on heights or densities.”
- *Urban Design at Street Level.* “Housing and green space would be a great idea [in the neighborhood], and might even give views of Lake Washington. Density is good; there is no density now. But housing must have a relationship to the ground.” “Have tree-line streetscapes on Henderson Street and MLK Jr. Way and a wide pedestrian mall on Henderson.”
- *Neighborhood Center.* “A well-organized community could produce many things we need, such as movie theaters, shops, restaurants, a computer store, a little city hall, a health food store, Kinko’s, a hardware store, Starbucks, a health clinic, and a post office.” “It would be great to have satellite offices of Microsoft and the UW here.”
- *Safety and Neighborhood Image.* “Public safety, and the perception that the neighborhood is a ghetto, continues to be a concern.”

## STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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### AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Henderson station area has 106 parcels and about 28 acres of land available for development. Opportunity sites represent vacant parcels, as well as select parcels that can potentially be increased in density. The largest total number of acres of opportunity sites are located in single-family residential districts throughout the station area. Sites are also available in the commercial areas and multi-family residential areas along Henderson Street.

### ***Zoning for Opportunity Sites***

Most opportunity sites are found in SF5000 districts, which permit low-density single-family residential development. Opportunity sites in the L2 districts allow for low-rise multi-family development, and C1 districts predominantly allow for additional general commercial uses. Typically, C1 districts attract low-density auto-oriented uses, because the district is allowed a wide variety of land uses, and because mixed use development, while permitted, is not given any incentive.

<b>Henderson: Opportunity Sites by Zoning District<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Acreage<sup>2</sup></i>
NC2-40	2	0.90
L-3	10	1.78
SF 5000	86	22.50
L-1	1	0.50
C1-40	7	2.31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>27.99</b>
<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.		
<sup>2</sup> Based on City of Seattle GIS database.		

## **DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS**

Existing zoning may constrain the potential for transit-supportive development. The single-family residential zones have low density development patterns and do not permit mixed use development. L2 multi-family residential districts allow greater density, but do not allow mixed use development that would promote pedestrian access to the station. Commercial zones allow a wide range of commercial activities as well as mixed use development, but they do not have incentives to promote the development of mixed use projects.

Overall, current zoning is likely to encourage and maintain the existing separation of low-density uses in the neighborhood. Potential development will not be likely to create improved conditions for pedestrian activity in the station area.

## **STATION AREA FORECASTS**

Three different forecasts were developed for the new population, employment, dwelling units, and commercial floor area that will be added to the station area by 2020:

1. “Without light rail transit;”
2. “With light rail transit, but without supportive land use policies;” and
3. “With both light rail transit *and* supportive land use policies.”

## **POPULATION AND HOUSING**

The PSRC Trend and Comprehensive Plan Extrapolation forecasts range from 83 to 122 dwelling units for this station area. We took an average of the two forecasts and project an additional 100 units and 150 people within the station area. This area is the one location in the Rainier Valley that has active permits on file with the City. There is one permit for an additional eight dwelling units in the station area.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL FLOOR AREA**

The PSRC Trend and Comprehensive Plan Extrapolation forecasts for commercial space are very similar. An average of the two forecasts results in an additional 50,000 square feet of commercial space. Existing space at several underutilized sites could be used more intensively and could boost employment above the forecast by an additional 170 jobs. Most new development will tend to be auto-oriented retail uses located in the southeast portion of the station area.

## **LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL**

The land use impacts of rail without supportive policies will likely be a modest increase in housing within one-quarter mile of the station areas. Because of the heavy amounts of auto traffic on MLK Way, any new housing development would likely be dispersed within the station area, rather than concentrated around the station. The possible reconfiguration of MLK Way to fewer lanes with surface light rail may make the area around the station more attractive for new development.

## **LAND USE IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL WITH SUPPORTIVE POLICIES**

The potential development strategies for the Henderson station area focus on providing zoning incentives for mixed-used development in the station area and along Henderson Street to create an attractive pedestrian-oriented boulevard. The desired development character of this boulevard would connect the station and the Rainier Avenue commercial area. Joint development of school district property along Henderson Street and the Metro Combined Sewer Overflow project could provide opportunities for direct economic/financial assistance that could boost development in the station area. Targeted development strategies could result in 110 new dwelling units (for a total of 220) and 17,000 square feet of new commercial floor area (for a total of 70,000 square feet).

## **POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

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Potential development strategies for the Henderson station area focus on improving access to the station and integrating it with the surrounding neighborhood. The station area can potentially become a higher-density mixed use node with major transit connections, although public assistance may be necessary for this to be achieved. The Holly Park Redevelopment

<b>Henderson Station Area – Market Forecasts, 1997-2020<sup>1</sup></b>				
	<u>1997</u>	<u>1997-2020 Growth</u>		
		<i>Without LRT</i>	<i>With LRT Only</i>	<i>LRT and Supportive Policies</i>
Population	755	150	165	330
Dwelling Units	282	100	110	220
Employment	219	170	180	230
Commercial Floor Area <sup>2</sup>	351	50	53	70

<sup>1</sup> Within a ¼-mile radius of the station location.

<sup>2</sup> Square footage (in thousands); includes commercial, industrial and institutional space, but excludes Sound Transit facilities and public facilities.

project provides a nearby example of a successful project that is using public assistance to provide additional housing opportunities. The existing residential market, consistent with Rainier Valley overall, has lower rents and higher vacancy rates, suggesting that public assistance is necessary for a successful development project.

The overall development strategy for the Henderson station area can be summarized as follows:

- *Increased Density.* Rezoning from single-family to low-rise multi-family uses can provide incentives for higher-density residential development and greater heights;
- *Mixed Use.* Incentives for mixed use development (through NC3 zoning) can provide the types of uses that encourage pedestrian activity;
- *Pedestrian Environment.* The station area can be made more supportive of pedestrians through implementation of a POZ that would provide for pedestrian facilities and limit new auto-oriented uses, helping to encourage walking to and from the station. Pedestrian linkages to adjacent neighborhoods through pedestrian improvements on Henderson Street and up to Beacon Hill can also be enhanced;
- *Affordable Housing.* Provision of affordable housing in the station area can provide opportunities for living in proximity to transit, particularly for lower income households that are less likely to own cars. Work with a local community development corporation, such as SEED, is possible;
- *Local Transit Services.* In addition to station area development, local transit services can help make the Henderson light rail station a key intermodal transfer point for bus and light rail systems. Bus service to Rainier Beach commercial areas and Renton are particularly important;
- *Parking Management.* Residential Parking Zones to the east and west of the Henderson station can help limit station parking on neighborhood streets.

The table of potential development strategies below shows high-priority and recommended actions for the Henderson station area. There are key opportunities for joint development partnerships and pilot projects in this station area. Potential joint development partners include the School District and King County Metro on its CSO project.

## Potential Development Strategies: Henderson (32)

Strategy	Potential Action	Comments
Land Use Tools	●	<i>Provide incentives for TOD adjacent to station, including mixed use (NC3-65), rezone housing opportunity sites on Henderson for L-3 and housing opportunity sites north and south of station (SF5000 to L2 or L3)</i>
Pedestrian Network	●	<i>Establish POZ around station and improve Henderson as a major east-west pedestrian linkage (a "boulevard" environment) to commercial areas on Rainier and to adjacent neighborhoods. Provide bike/trail links in powerline right-of-way via Chief Sealth Trail.</i>
Parking Management	○	<i>Consider RPZ west and east of station. Encourage Sound Transit to provide bus layover and any commuter parking at intermodal station at Boeing Access Road.</i>
Economics/Financial Assistance	●	<i>Help CDCs finance affordable housing and appropriate mixed-use development.</i>
Regulatory Process	?	<i>Explore expedited review/SEPA.</i>
Local Transit Service	●	<i>Provide feeder bus service, including a connection to Rainier Beach commercial areas and for neighborhood circulation.</i>
Development Partnerships	●	<i>Explore joint development opportunity for community facilities/mixed use development on school district lands along Henderson.</i>
Pilot Projects	●	<i>Determine feasibility of joint development opportunities with School District and Metro CSO projects. Rebuild Henderson pursuant to Neighborhood Plan concepts via Metro CSO and Sound Transit.</i>

✓ = Supportive Policy/Program in Place

● = High Priority Action

○ = Recommended Action

? = Further Study Required

TOD = Transit-Oriented Development

POZ = Pedestrian Overlay Zone

RPZ = Residential Parking Zone



*Henderson*